Plato's "Crito": A Summary from PhilosophyBro.com

Crito: "Good morning, Socrates. Look, there's no time to waste - we have to get you out of here before you're executed tomorrow. Don't worry about imposing on your friends, we're more than happy to support you, and I know a bunch of people who will gladly take you in in exile. I bribed the guard, I have a boat waiting, it's time to go."

Socrates: "Calm down. They won't execute me for at least three days. But I'm not going anywhere. I will go through with the execution as scheduled."

Crito: "Um, what? Socrates, this city condemned you to die when you did nothing. Look, if you won't leave for your sake, leave for our sake. Seriously, your friends are going to look like complete jerks if it looks like we didn't at least try to get you out of here - and since we're rich, anything less than success *will* look like that. Besides, who will raise your sons?"

Socrates: "Okay, Crito, slow down for a second. First of all, my sons will be fine whether I'm dead or in exile - I wouldn't take them with me to live in fear. Second, you shouldn't care what the average man says about justice any more than what the average man thinks about sickness. If a doctor tells you you're sick and everyone else tell you you look fine, who are you going to believe? Don’t worry about popular opinion, bro. My friends should know better than to be swayed by the masses by now. The only question is, is leaving just? If so, then I'm out of here. Otherwise, chillin'. I have no interest in living if I have to live unjustly - I've spent my whole life saying that the just life is the good life, and I'm not going to blow it out of fear."

Crito: "I was hoping you'd say that. You're helping them commit an injustice. You're as guilty as them if you don't leave! HA! FINALLY! I win one!"

Socrates: "Okay, easy there, champ. That's a bold claim. The laws exist for a reason, and my whole life I've given my word to be bound by them. Now, they have condemned me to die - it is my responsibility to see that through, rather than break the law. What if people went around invalidating a law whenever it benefited them? CRAZY. CHAOS. We must either accept the laws as a whole, or get out. We don't get to pick and choose which laws are *convenient* for us, which laws we *like,* especially when there's a perfectly good way to change bad laws. Remember that law that said, "No one can have candy” ? Yeah, *me neither*, because that's a terrible idea and if someone tried that we would overturn it in a heartbeat. I had my chance to change the laws my whole life, and I never did because I thought they were good laws, including the law that says, 'A man shall be bound by the punishment given to him by a jury after he has a fair trial.' Sounds fair to me even now.  It's not the Law that has hurt me, it is the people - but they didn't break the Law. I can't hurt the Law because the people messed it up. That would be like me punching Plato, my favorite student, because you messed up a casserole he taught you to make for me.

"Besides, think of all the good the Law has done. It married my parents, it provided for my education, it paid for me to learn music, it kept peace, it allows trade - all in all, we've made some pretty sweet laws, bro. The Law has provided for me like a parent. We all made a deal to be bound by these laws, everyone in Athens, and that let us make it rain prosperity. Now, are you telling me it's fair that I stayed in Athens and benefited for my *entire life* because everyone followed the laws, but now I should break them because I'm special or exempt or something?"

Crito: "I, uh- that is to say-"

Socrates: "I mean bro, I was just a kid when all that happened. And for all that, I *still* couldhave left whenever I pleased with no hard feelings. Did I? No. I stayed, because I think Athens is awesome. In fact, I not only stayed, I spent my whole life telling everyone how awesome Athenian Democracy and justice in general are. At my trial, I said I love my city enough to die rather than leave. I meant that."

Crito: "Yeah, but..."

Socrates: "So here are my options: Die in accord with the laws that I have for so long cherished and benefited from. Or, leave now, go back on my word, and watch from afar as my friends are punished for helping me, my children are mocked for being sons of an exile, and my *entire life's work* is washed away in a tidal wave of hypocrisy. And then when I die, I'll get to the underworld and they'll be like, 'Didn't you break a promise to an entire city? I hope you like rolling boulders.' Yeah, forget that noise. If the people have unjustly convicted me, they have done so as justly as possible, Crito, and I'm staying. I trust my friends will bring up my sons proudly - I myself have no regrets."

Crito: "Shucks. I hate it when you're right, Socrates. So that's it, then, huh?"

Socrates: "Yes, Crito, that's it. I made a promise to follow a Law that has benefited me much - I must pay my dues and live in accord with the promise I made, even unto death."